Problem Solving Management of Principal in Improving School’s Quality

Asep Suparman
SMK Negeri 3 Rejang Lebong, Bengkulu, Indonesia
E-mail: suparmanasep102@gmail.com

Julie Simon Macariola
Philippine Stewards for Humanity and Excellence Inc
E-mail: juliesimonmac@unib.ac.id

Received 2 January 2022; Revised 15 February 2022; Accepted 20 March 2022

Abstract

The purpose of writing in this paper is to present a description of innovations regarding the application of problem solving management by principals in an effort to improve school achievement. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. This research is useful in the field of principal management in managing schools that have limited infrastructure and students who are categorized as less, both economically and academically. Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that the application of problem solving management by principals can improve school achievement marked by the number of awards received by schools, increased public interest and the existence of other schools that have comparative studies in schools. The novelty in this study is the managerial pattern of the principal in dealing with various kinds of complex problems but is still able to improve the quality of the school.

Keywords: School Management; Problem Solving; School Quality; Principal Skill

1. Introduction

The principal as an education manager is required to improve the quality of the school he leads. While each school has different problems and some are
even complex. Leading a school requires making the right principal decisions, so that it can improve school achievement (Febriantina, 2011). The progress and improvement of school achievement is often determined by the capability of the principal as an education manager in the school (Sasongko, 2006). According to (Manora, 2019), leadership in schools has a central role in school management. Leaders become designers, implementers, and evaluators at the same time. An important function to maintain and ensure the performance process runs well and at the same time ensure the results obtained are equally good. This requires a leader to have more and better skills than others.

The Education Unit is led by a school principal. Hierarchically, the principal will supervise educators and education staff to ensure the learning process in educational institutions goes well. As stated (Muflihah & Haqiqi, 2019), that the principal's leadership is even central in determining whether an educational institution such as a school will be valuable and carry out its duties as a learning space or not. Furthermore, because schools are closely related to the preparation of human resources, the principal's leadership task is not trivial. The principal who is able to give the color of a school will be able to make the school a proper home for students to study, as well as provide comfort to the teaching staff and education staff in it. In contrast to other forms of institutions that do not come into contact with humans, schools are institutions that are almost all human elements. Furthermore, the number of human components that make the object of the educational implementation process is not small and heterogeneous. According to (Danim, 2004), that the role of the principal is weighed more heavily with the aim of the school as an educational institution that prepares quality human resources.

2. Methods

The method used in this research is literature study. Literature study is the first step in the data collection method. Literature study is a data collection method that is directed at searching for data and information through documents, both written documents, photographs, pictures, and electronic documents that can support the writing process. "Research results will also be more credible if supported by photographs. or existing academic and artistic writings.” (Sugiyono,
2005:83). So it can be said that literature review can affect the credibility of the research results.

The research instrument used is to document and present the results of research in the field by relevant previous researchers. It also documents theories about education management. The raw data obtained are then processed and presented and interpreted according to the research objectives. The scope of this research is about the principal and his management. So taking the education management theory proposed by Hasan, (2017); & Sutarman et al., (2016). In addition, it also provides qualitative data regarding the role of school principals in the institutions they are under.

3. Results and Discussion

The demands of globalization and the changing order of society and its views on the dynamics of life are challenges to the leadership of the current principal. According to (Kawuri, 2003), the process of leading a school is no longer as simple as ensuring that all learning processes and activities in schools go as planned. More than that, schools must be able to prepare graduates who are ready and capable in facing global challenges. It becomes another problem because this generational shift that occurs is not really understood by many people. Most school leadership still views the learning process the same as the previous generation. Whereas the relevance to the growth and speed of information transfer through technology has moved faster in the last decade.

According to (Julaiha, 2019), the unpreparedness of leaders in dealing with these changes causes stuttering and affects policy making which is often not considered relevant to the needs of millennial generation students. Quick adjustments while still paying attention to the vision that was built and became the foundation of educational institutions and ensuring school outputs are ready to face the challenges of globalization, must be carried out by school principals quickly and anticipatively. Until now, the principal's leadership function in an educational institution is still the most important. Both in the implementation of the learning process in schools or in terms of management. And the innovations of individual principals that are formed based on the speed of absorbing information
and adapting to changing times, are what differentiate one school from another. This leadership not only regulates and ensures the learning process, but is broader than that.

At least some of the principal functions in an educational institution include several things according to (Hendarman, 2019), namely the function as an educator, a manager, an administrator, supervisor, leader, being an innovator and at the same time as a motivator. These roles carried out by school principals have been shown to have a significant influence, especially on teacher performance. As is known, teachers are the foremost motor in the mission of carrying out the process of transferring knowledge and inculcating character in schools, which also determines the competence of graduates from a school. As an educator, the principal must be able to carry out a continuous process of coaching teachers, plan teaching well and build good relationships with the community or other institutions. This indicator determines how ready the principal is to play the function as an educator in the school environment and in the wider school-related environment.

The principal's capacity in managing can be seen from his expertise in building an effective concept to improve the quality of school services as an educational institution. In addition to understanding conceptual issues, technical issues in the field and handling conflicts encountered from program implementation must also be ensured to be understood. There is a form of anticipation that must be prepared and faced by the principal. As according to (Snyuer & Giella, n.d.) that principals must also understand administrative matters in schools. Not to carry out the administrative process as a whole, but to ensure and measure the administrative achievements of educational institutions. These abilities include managing curriculum and teaching, managing students, facilities and infrastructure, managing school finances and staffing as well as in correspondence and public or institutional relations. The principal must have a standard of understanding to be able to ensure that the process involving the entire management chain is effective and complete.

To facilitate activities, administrative assignments are borne by teachers and education staff who have the capacity as drafters and executors. The establishment of a school structure such as a vice principal is to ensure that the
administrative stages run well, with supervision by the principal. In some cases, the principal must be able to provide an objective and open assessment in the implementation of his leadership. An objective assessment of teacher performance is sourced from the evaluation of each teacher which has been openly compiled and delivered to all educators and education staff. This objectivity must be owned by the principal to prevent the growth of negative assumptions that will affect the managerial process of an educational institution.

With regard to the level of objectivity, this is often hampered by standard subjectivity which is generally difficult to ignore. According to (Meitia, 2010), that the different conditions of each teacher or employee, both in terms of knowledge and personal life, form an opinion against someone. However, far more important than standardization, which must be the same, is to give appropriate rights and respect the efforts of every teacher and employee, which is more important. Sometimes compensation cannot be of the same value, forcing to be average will be an obstacle for high achieving teachers. Therefore, apart from the value of objectivity on the basic things that are the right of every teacher and employee, it is also accompanied by an appreciation to give appreciation to those who struggle and learn more, outside of subjective opinions on the personal life of a teacher and employee.

Whoever is in the leadership, always expects a leader who is able to make important decisions, chooses priorities, is confident, responsible, ready and willing to take risks, big hearted, honest and exemplary. Those characters are all the characteristics of a leader wherever it is and become a form of the worthiness of a leader. A principal must be the most confident, the most open, the most honest, the most responsible and the most willing to take risks. Become a figure where teachers and employees can consult, where students feel comfortable, and be a role model in all forms of things. A school principal cannot force a teacher to be an example of worship if the principal does not start by going to the mosque or school prayer room. A principal cannot ask a teacher to write if the principal is not literate earlier.

According to (Suriadi, 2020), that the peak is an exemplary figure who is recognized and loved by all schools. That which is then referred to as the principal is the center of school leadership. Principals who fail to become trusted figures
will experience problems in implementing school programs. Principals who fail to be role models will fail to shape the character of teachers and students. Principals who smoke in schools do not deserve to talk about the vision of a healthy school. Principals who do not worship cannot carry out the mission of a religious school. Beyond that, exemplary is absolute everywhere. Not only in the school environment but also in the family and in the community. Once the principal is determined to build a religious school, in his daily life the family and the community will continue to be assessed.

It doesn't stop there, a school principal must play the role of an innovator. The indicators of this achievement are the existence of system innovations in the learning process, innovations in the curriculum, and how to implement these innovations in the field. The emphasis of the curriculum is on ensuring that the process of teaching and learning activities in schools goes well. One of the supports for this is by continuously developing innovations so that school achievement targets can be achieved.

According to (Wulandari et al., 2018), the principal's sensitivity to environmental conditions such as understanding the energy potential possessed and or the advantages possessed by individuals, both teachers and employees, makes the principal can act as a motivator. This interpersonal understanding is important for school principals to build individual communication with the members they lead. Because at one time, the principal must be able to motivate his fellow teachers, in the right way and form of communication. In addition, in building a system of teamwork in a school environment, which contains different characters, it is necessary to understand the differences and uniqueness of each member. Communication skills as a motivator are important for school principals.

The government has outlined the competencies that school principals must have through Permendiknas No. 13 of 2007. These competencies are personality competencies, managerial competencies, entrepreneurial competencies, supervisory competencies, and social competencies. All these competencies make school principals must be able to manage schools from the strategic level to the technical level. Every existing competency has been included with the actual implementation of the principal's performance to be able to lead schools to be of high quality.
Referring also to the main tasks of school principals as standardized in the Work Guide for Principals by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2017, the main task of school coconuts is to develop and or perfect the school's vision, mission, and goals. In addition, it also prepares the school organizational structure, prepares the medium-term work plan (RKJM) and annual work plan (RKT), prepares school regulations and develops a management information system.

According to (Lazaridou, 2014) that the essence of the main task is to build a solid foundation, and explain each stage of the plan to achieve the vision clearly as well. This task is carried out by the principal as part of a way to determine the direction of the school he leads. This capacity is only owned by the leader of an organization, and for schools it is owned by the principal. Like a captain who reads the direction of the wind and determines where the sails are developed, the principal is trying to make sure the direction of every movement made by the school is in accordance with the vision. In this case, the vision is the goal that must be achieved by the school. The principal is not a single fighter or a single fighter. This means that the principal must know and understand and does not mean that he has to be the one who can do it best.

The skill of being able to do technical things is indeed an important provision, but the principal is not a technical implementer. The ability to know and be able to evaluate, guide and ensure is important, but that does not mean that the principal runs alone. The key to all existing programs in schools is how principals innovate programs for their schools. Some schools will be managed very ordinary, just being a place for the teaching and learning process to take place, while other schools have a vision to grow and develop from the others. Even what determines whether a school will be known as superior or not depends on how a school principal manages the institution he leads.

The principal's planning task is to formulate mid-term and annual work plans. More than that, formulating what the school will be like for some time to come. The determination of the school plan is based on the basic problems faced by the school. So that the program that is designed is actually a solution to the existing problem.
The deepening of the principal problems of the school is carried out by the principal by looking at and analyzing the entire process in the school. By involving members in their leadership space, schools can analyze the school's shortcomings and weaknesses. Meanwhile, school targets and achievements have generally been regulated with graduate achievement standards set by the government. The school's task is to translate the process to realize the achievement of school graduates.

Skills in determining programs to achieve goals are obtained based on the experience and knowledge of the principal. This is one of the causes of how each school can be recognized with its distinctive achievements and colors. Although the guidelines provided are the same, or in general the training provided is also the same, the knowledge and experience of the principal determines how the school will be recognized. Since being given the mandate as principal, the author immediately determines what the school wants to achieve and how to achieve it. Analyze what are the shortcomings and weaknesses of the school and then see what potential can be explored and mobilized to build the school into a superior school.

According to (Lazaridou, 2014), the skills of principals as leaders of educational institutions have been proven to have an impact on how the school will move and build itself. The ability to recognize weaknesses will be a systematic step in building improvements to these weaknesses. The ability to explore potential will make the stage to increase that potential and become a special value of the school. In commonly used language, the skills to perform a SWOT analysis (strength, weakness, opportunity, treatment). This paper also explains how the authors implement various programs that are intended to build schools by utilizing existing potential and dealing with the problems found. The author tries to move and be dynamic in carrying out school leadership tasks so that schools are ready and able to develop faster than most. This is in order to catch up with previous lags and the rapid development of the times.

The targets reflected in the annual work plan and the school's mid-term work plan are complemented by achievement indicators. The nature of the target is dynamic and sustainable. On the targets that have been running and are starting to be achieved, at the same time new innovations are built to answer problems that
arise later. Therefore, the school continues to move and experience changes for the better. More often than not, school problems cannot be solved at once and take longer. The determination of the school work plan is prepared periodically to solve the problems one by one, based on the existing priorities. The higher the priority will be implemented with more readiness and precedence, and continue like that until the school can achieve the vision that was built.

With regard to the school's vision, it is basically not an eternal and immutable goal. Along with the development of the school, at the same time it will also require the school to assemble a better vision. This vision is very likely to change and increase according to the school's needs for long-term achievement targets. Every vision that has been made must be socialized to the school community, both students, teachers and related elements. Socialization is also important to the relevant agencies. After being socialized, the step in the long term is to ensure the implementation of the vision and oversee its implementation through programs designed as derivatives under it. The formulation of the mission is not significantly different from the formulation of the vision. The involvement of other elements to ensure the input of strategic steps that are prepared as a mission is the result of mutual agreement. The mission's emphasis is on improving the quality of services for students and paying attention to the quality of graduates from schools. The formulated mission contains general and specific statements related to the school program.

Principals who have succeeded in setting school targets through the school's vision, mission, and goals, together with the team and for the input and consideration of all elements related to the school, then ensure the formation of a program planning strategy. This strategy will be very important which will serve as a guide in preparing medium-term and long-term work plans. The annual work plan will be divided into several stages which are used as the basis for preparing the school budget plan. This budgeting is very important to ensure and plan every program that is made to run optimally and according to the capacity of the school.

Monitoring and evaluation is carried out by the principal to ensure that the program is running as it should. At the same time it becomes a momentum to assess the effectiveness of a plan. This will affect the periodic evaluations carried out by schools to determine whether a program is really important and can be
implemented or not. This evaluation also affects the school's future plans and relates to more complex policies.

The strategic steps taken as the principal duties of the principal are reflected in the chart at figure 1 with Indonesian language:

![Flow Strategy Work of Development School](image)


As a leader in educational institutions such as schools, a principal must be able to develop strategic plans and effective managerial skills. He must be able to
encourage the growth of ability and a strong will for teachers and staff, as well as students, to be able to carry out their duties properly. He must also be ready and able to provide guidance for all members in the school environment. To be at the forefront of contributing to the progress of the school and an inspiration to all its members.

Principals hold dual roles in leadership and in management functions. Even though in terms of management, you don't have to carry out all the work yourself, but knowing and having management skills is a very good thing. Principals will have broad capabilities in managing educational institutions. As stated (Nurhayati, 2017) that the principal's leadership function includes developing school directions and strategies, directing the human resources he leads through effective communication and inspiration and motivation. In the management function, the principal must know about planning and budgeting, organizing staff activities and monitoring, controlling, evaluating and solving problems.

Principal leadership capability refers to Queensland government in the presentation of 21st century principal leadership by (Sanders et al., 2017), which divides principal leadership into several capabilities. Namely educational leadership, personality leadership, relationship leadership, intellectual leadership, and organizational leadership.

This educational leadership relates to professional knowledge and understanding of the art of teaching and learning for the attainment of school graduates. This component focuses more on the quality of learning. As according to (Tunggadewi, 2019) that a school principal must have knowledge and focus in the field of achieving school quality. Personal leadership or personal capability is related to the strength and quality in each principal which then becomes the basis of the professional and ethical work activities that accompany it. The principal has a personality quality that makes him understand the ethics of living individually which is reflected in his leadership.

Leadership is closely related to the interpersonal skills of principals needed to develop networks and maintain quality with more heterogeneous circles. As argued (Azuar et al., 2017), if personality leadership is about principals who know themselves and have an understanding of individual professionalism
and ethics, then relationship leadership is the principal's ability to build interactions and maintain relationships with more people.

According to (Stephen P. Robbins., 2003), that intellectual leadership is the ability of principals to think intelligently, provide objective and reasoned judgments, and make wise decisions. The principal's knowledge of cognitive matters is actualized to provide an objective assessment as well as in making appropriate and effective policies.

Organizational leadership is functioned to support continuous school development by managing human resources, finances, and school facilities. The principal thinks about how these elements are optimized and utilized properly. carry out developmental innovations that are useful for organizational improvement. The target is for schools to become places where the elements in it, especially human resources, excel in many ways.

Regarding the leadership of school principals and school management in the modern era, special attention is paid to the sensitivity and emotional prowess of school principals. The emotional intelligence of the principal will have a broad influence and is related to the principal's endurance in carrying out the vision and being consistent with the targets made. Self-awareness is a form of emotional ability that must be possessed by school principals. It has to do with understanding one's own emotional state and the impact these emotions have on relationships outside of oneself. Either with teachers, staff, students or the community.

Motivational skills relate to a strong drive or desire to go beyond money, material things, or status. More people develop emotionally because of the motivational factors that make them moving and dynamic. And in some cases, some do not necessarily have to do with the attainment of material form. It is even more about things that smell psychic. Such as the desire to be recognized, seen, and the desire to complete a job well. Sometimes it is also a form of a desire to actualize himself and give self-esteem. Principals who understand the meaning of motivation will find it easier to be a motivator for others. Because he has been obtained from the principal's personal communication efforts with him. There is a form of contemplation that makes it possible to enter into the person of another person. Use a more appropriate way based on each character.
If motivation comes from self-actualization and transmits it to others, then empathy is a form of trying to understand something from the other person's point of view. It is very common where members of the ward led by the principal commit some type of error for example. With skills in empathy, principals will find wisdom from the perspective of others and make decisions that are weighted based on the conditions of others. This helps to conduct a personal evaluation of a policy made by the principal.

Therefore, according to (Sumintono et al., 2019), being a school principal is not just accepting a position and letting it go. There are many things that must be prepared by the principal personally so that all self-competencies are up to a decent level. Because, the principal will be given a lot of authority to decide policies that are important and even have a significant effect on the school environment.

The principal has power in the form of legitimacy which is hierarchically part of the principal as the leader of educational institutions. The principal can force the members under him which means there is punishment and control. The principal has authority in more things that will be done as part of the order.

After the data was collected and then processed, the results were as follows: the learning log and testimony entries, in the opinion of Serlia Gustiani representing the students, said: "Although our school is small and the majority of the students are economically disadvantaged and academically lacking, thank God, many students have made achievements in this school. 1st winner of LKS Vocational School in Fishery and Livestock at the Bengkulu Provincial Level to the National Level received a Superior Medal, 1st Winner of the O2SN Karate Men's and Women's Gold Medal at Bengkulu Provincial Level so that they became Finalist of O2SN Vocational High School at the National Level, became Regency and Provincial Paskibraka, 1st winner of the men's team march and daughters of the Independence Day of the Republic of Indonesia and many others". This is reinforced by the opinion of Sasmahera, M.Pd who represents the teacher, that: "Although our school is located in a hamlet with limited facilities and the majority of students are economically poor, their parents are poor and their academic abilities are lacking, but thank God many of our students excel. in this school, there are achievements at the district, provincial and even national
levels. So that with this school with many achievements, SMKN 3 Rejang Lebong is increasingly recognized by many parties”. Other evidence from the increasing recognition of many parties is the increasing public interest or trust in sending their children to SMKN 3 Rejang Lebong, Bengkulu Province.

This opinion is supported by the opinion of Alfandie as the head of the School Committee who said that: “Since Mr. Asep Suparman became the principal at SMKN 3 Rejang Lebong, there have been a lot of innovative breakthroughs made for school progress, including through the implementation of problem solving management. So that the impact of this innovation breakthrough is that although SMKN 3 Rejang Lebong has limited infrastructure and a narrow area of about 3,512 square meters and the lack of building facilities, practice rooms, and also the majority of students here are categorized as economically disadvantaged, teaching and learning activities are going well and incised various school achievements every year up to the national level”, so that because they have many achievements, the public's interest increases to send their children to SMKN 3 Rejang Lebong, so that the total number of students is more than 475 students. ".

Then Surya Darminta as the school superintendent strengthened the previous opinion that: “Asep Suparman as a school principal was persistent in the midst of limited infrastructure, but was still able to compete with other SMKs in Bengkulu Province. Because this school is unique and interesting, even though the majority of its students are categorized as less academically and economically weak in their families, but it produces various proud achievements, both students and schools. In 2015 it received an award from the Minister of Education and Culture as a school that has integrity, then in the last three years from 2016, 2017 to 2018 it became a Model School of the Internal Quality Assurance System set by LPMP Bengkulu, until this school has a culture of quality, even in 2019 it became a reference school.

From the results of the collection of various achievements, it has led to an increase in the quality of schools and the interest of the community to send their children to SMKN 3 Rejang Lebong. Thus, even though the school has many limitations when managed with a problem solving management pattern, the principal can still improve school performance. This fact illustrates that creative
school principals are able to create new programs, in the form of new activities such as action research activities to improve the quality of education in schools and in competitions that are able to improve teacher performance in improving the quality of schools as a whole (Sasongko, 2006).

4. Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of school principal problem solving management is proven to improve school quality. It is proven that in 2015 SMKN 3 Rejang Lebong received a certificate of appreciation from the Minister of Education and Culture as a school that has a high integrity index in the implementation of the National Examination. Then in 2016 to 2018 it became a model school for the Internal Quality Assurance System (SPMI) assisted by the Bengkulu Province Education Quality Assurance Institution (LPMP). In fact, in 2019 SMKN 3 Rejang Lebong was designated by the Ministry of Education and Culture to be a reference school and a pilot school for revitalization.

5. Acknowledgement

The authors would like to thank the previous researchers who have been willing to share data about school principals in managing the institutions they cover. In addition, to the academic community who became informants who strengthened the argumentation of the data that had been processed by the researcher. The role of informants in this source triangulation framework is very useful. In addition, the researcher would like to thank the institutions of the Public Vocational High School 3 Rejang Lebong and the University of Bengkulu.

6. References


Principal's Role in Improving Education Quality Management in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah]. *Quality*, 7(2), 48. https://doi.org/10.21043/quality.v7i2.6039


Principal's Role as Manager in Creating Effective Schools at SMP An-Nur Bululawang Malang]. 1.